



## The Art of Romance

*Kaye Dacus*

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## **The Art of Romance** Kaye Dacus

Dylan Bradley, who once illustrated steamy romances under the name Patrick Callaghan, has moved into his grandparents' guest house in Nashville. Caylor Evans, having once written titillating novels under the penname Melanie Mason, lives with her grandmother. When their lives collide, due to the machinations of meddling matriarchs, the pasts of Dylan and Caylor threaten to derail their futures. Will they accept each other for who they now are and once were? Or will they never discover the true art of romance?

## **The Art of Romance Details**

Date : Published May 1st 2011 by Barbour Books (first published April 6th 2011)

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Author : Kaye Dacus

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## From Reader Review The Art of Romance for online ebook

### Denise says

Fun but a little slow in the second half.

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### Emily says

4.5!

I got the itch to re-read this one and the third book, and took advantage of Thanksgiving break to do so. I remembered having so much FUN reading these, and I was not disappointed. I loved how REAL Kaye Dacus builds her characters. The people in this book seemed like the kind that you COULD just come across in your life. Her characters are flawed, messy, and absolutely delightful. I didn't completely agree with everything her characters believed, but they're characters, and we have to remember that. One thing I AM glad of: Dylan showed remorse over the choices that he made. Yes, he was a victim, but he also took responsibility for the choices that were his. I appreciated that.

And Caylor. She just reads like someone you would WANT to be friends with. I just loved her relationship with Sassy. I wanted to jump in the kitchen and talk with them. And throttle her sister.

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### Sandirae Kennedy says

Not entirely like the "typical" Christian romance. I like how the main characters have to deal with sensitive real life issues that we tend to overlook.

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### Cheryl Olson says

If you are looking for a nice, contemporary, romantic, Christian fiction novel with an artistic flair... and meddling Grandma's, then this is the book for you. The Art of Romance, by Kaye Dacus starts us out with 2 plotting Grandmas "Sassy" and "Perty"- don't you love them already?- who have decided that it's time for a little matchmaking for their respective Grandkids Caylor and Dylan. As these Grandma's are a part of a larger group called collectively the "matchmakers" (this is Book 2 in The Matchmakers Series), Caylor and Dylan stand no chance. After all these Grandmas are in a race for Great Grandchildren!

This story involves an accomplished and Tenured English Professor and author Caylor Evans and the struggling, in more ways than one, artist Dylan Bradley. Dylan Bradley is coming off of a bad and dominating relationship with an old colleague at a former college in New York and trying to heal from his past mistakes and start over in a whole new place, his home town of Nashville, Tennessee. He is doing this by moving in with his Grandparents to try and get his life back in order. He has a lot of work to do, in terms of his relationship with God, his parents , brothers, etc., because his former relationship was incredibly toxic in his life, not exactly a time to meet someone new and start a relationship. But, in time, they do and there are many hurdles to overcome during this story. A part of the story that I really loved was one involving

Dylan and his 3 brothers- they all come together via a Skype type of interlude- and I don't want to spoil it, but- I just loved how the author incorporated that into the storyline because it is just so "now". It turns out that Dylan is not the only one with a skeleton in his closet, it appears that Caylor has one of her own. So both of them need to be honest and have "some esplainin' to do"( Imagine Ricky Ricardo accent here).

I think that Kaye Dacus does a nice job of taking her characters on a journey where they truly do grow and change. They are not perfect people, some more flawed than others, but with God's help trying to change and grow and become all that they are meant to be. I just think it brings hope to show the process and how they change, as opposed to," they are perfect from the beginning and have it all together all the time". Kaye Dacus always throws some cute humor in her characters as well, which makes it fun to read. It's also a pretty sweet love story with just the perfect ending. So, if you're in the mood for that sweet Contemporary Christian Romance- then I think you'll enjoy this book. And the moral of the story- always listen to your Grandma.

Disclosure-I was graciously provided with a digital copy of "The Art of Romance" by the publisher, Barbour Books through the Netgalley program. The opinions I expressed are my own and I was not obligated to write a positive review .

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### **Teresa Snyder says**

A slightly different twist on a typical romance storyline. Dylan, our hero, is recovering from an emotionally controlling relationship with an older woman; his boss. He comes home after getting fired and finds himself falling in love with Caylor; an older woman and his colleague.

Good story, but lite on the actual romance. Good ending. Looking forward to book three.

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### **Laura B says**

This is the second installment of the Matchmaker series by KD. I have to say I enjoyed the first one book more. In this story, to me, the middle seemed to drag and I found I would force myself to just keep reading just to get through it; however it did pick up the last quarter of the book, which made it more enjoyable.

This is Caylor's story of the three friends (Zarah's story was the first novel), and her character was fine, but the hero, Dylan, was weak. I do not mean the character development in this novel, but the way he was acted throughout the novel and I wondered what did Caylor ever saw in him. Dylan's character arc was all about how he wanted to "find" himself. I think I would have been less put off if it focused more on getting over his last relationship instead of "finding" himself.

I do like how this series has the backstory of the matchmaking manipulation the grandmothers do. It's different than other Christian romance novels.

If you like KD's writing, her "Brides of Bonneterre" is better, IMHO.

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### **Cathy Daniel says**

This book was remarkable. Major kudos for this author. I read a lot of Christian fiction and a lot of times I'm suspending my disbelief and shaking my head by how couples end up together when clearly one or both really need counseling. This book had the hero being the hurt one, recovering from a controlling relationship and acknowledging it and getting help before proceeding with the new relationship. WHAT?! Yes! Magnificently done! I truly appreciated the message, the realness and just the likable factor of the main characters. Truly a great romance! I can't wait for book 3!

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### **Victor Gentile says**

Kaye Dacus in her new book, "The Art of Romance" Book Two in the "Matchmakers" series published by Barbour reunites us with the five grandmothers who have united to marry off their single grandchildren.

From the back cover: Misconceptions arise when the meddling matriarchs connive.

Sassy Evans and Perty Bradley are determined to get their older grandchildren married off, but when twenty-eight-year-old Dylan comes home after being fired from his teaching position because of the betrayal of his ex-girlfriend, Perty knows her grandson has more important issues to deal with first.

Sassy understands her friend's reservations about timing, but she also sees so many ways in which Dylan would be the perfect match for her thirty-four-year-old granddaughter, Caylor. With his record of acclaimed paintings and Caylor's bestselling novels, they could complement each other's talents and provide each other support and encouragement. And there's no denying the spark of attraction between the English professor with the untamed red hair and the painter with the unusual tattoos.

But neither grandmother realizes the secrets both Caylor and Dylan are keeping from each other. Will pain and embarrassment from the past keep Caylor and Dylan apart, or will they develop the courage to be truthful with each other and discover the true art of romance?

Kaye Dacus really knows how to write a wonderful story. Once again Ms. Dacus has filled the pages of "The Art of Romance" with high drama, wonderful romance and fascinating characters. It is a book about secrets as the two leads have pasts that they are trying to keep hidden to not cause embarrassment. There are the themes of family as each of the main characters works out issues with siblings and parents. There is also the theme of forgiving oneself for past mistakes so that life can move on. And, of course, there are the moments that you laugh out loud. "The Art of Romance" is a lot of fun and I recommend this book highly. I am greatly looking forward to book three in the series.

If you missed the interview for "A Case For Love", a different series from Kaye Dacus, and would like to listen to it and/or interviews with other authors and professionals please go to [www.kingdomhighlights.org](http://www.kingdomhighlights.org) where they are available On Demand.

To listen to 24 hours non-stop Christian music please visit our internet radio station  
[www.kingdomairwaves.org](http://www.kingdomairwaves.org)

Disclosure of Material Connection: I received this book free from Barbour Publishers. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255 : "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and Testimonials in Advertising."

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### **Lyn says**

*The Art of Romance* is the first Kaye Dacus book I'd read. I found I love her voice. And her characters. They caught my interest right away and carried me along. This is definitely a Southern novel with its emphasis on family and a quirky one at that. So I can recommend this entertaining book --to those who like humor, genuine emotion and a touch of romance. Way to go, Kaye!

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### **Bookworm1858 says**

The Art of Romance by Kaye Dacus  
Barbour, 2011  
319 pages  
Christian Romance  
3.5/5 stars

Source: Received a free copy via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

I did not like this book as much as Love Remains but the ending still made me a little teary-eyed as I ended up invested in the relationship of Caylor and Dylan, both of whom believe they have significant baggage.

Caylor lives with her grandmother, having moved in after the death of her grandfather to provide transportation and support. She has resigned herself to never getting involved in a relationship due to her obligation to her grandmother. Instead she celebrates Zarah and Bobby's pending marriage and throws herself into life at the college where she is tenured and into her inspirational romance novels.

Dylan has legitimate baggage and then baggage I found ridiculous. The legitimacy comes from a verboten relationship with the head of his department at the art school in Philadelphia where he used to work. She was controlling and slowly changed most of his personality and cut him off from his family. The fact that she was older and more established in the field than him gives him worries in relation to Caylor, who is also older and already has tenure. The other baggage? Well...

Dylan refers to his big shameful secret about what he did to put himself through college before revealing it to his three brothers in a very sweet "intervention" scene. I expected this to be that he stripped and/or served as a gigolo to wealthy older women. Instead his secret is that he designed and modeled for romance covers. Um, kind of lame? Not worth as much anguish as he spent on it. Funnily enough, his covers were for Melanie Mason...the pen name of Caylor, under which she wrote increasingly steamy novels and was inspired by the handsome model on the cover.

I definitely liked the book more once they got together because their whingeing before that dragged on too long. Besides their romance issues, Caylor has conflict with her irresponsible younger sister Sage and Dylan

struggles with his parents's expectations and their inability to accept his art as a legitimate career path. Those stories were okay but I wanted more romance. I also would have liked more God; although finding a church is an important part of the story, I wanted to see more of each of them having a relationship with God instead of having church signify such a relationship.

The romance novel plot was interesting to me because I'm pretty sure that such inspirational romance writers as Francine Rivers and Robin Lee Hatcher wrote secular romances before switching exclusively to Christian romances in order to write cleaner novels and include mentions of God. I think Caylor is supposed to have followed the same path as them. It also makes me wonder if Dacus used to write secular romances?

Overall: An okay romance with some interesting subplots; I'm hoping the third book, Turnabout's Fair Play will be more to my taste.

Cover: Caylor's not the painter but it fits in with the pattern established by Love Remains.

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### **Taylor says**

Should have been spaced better. Too cluttered and busy.

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### **Rambling Readers says**

I confess that I was a bit wary of reading a novel bearing the title The Art of Romance. It is not necessarily a title that one wants to reveal to one's co-workers, who may not be acquainted with inspirational novels. In reality, Kaye Dacus's second book in the Matchmakers series is rather light on the actual romance between the two lead characters. Because both Caylor and Dylan harbor "secrets" from their pasts, much of the novel is spent with them analyzing and fighting their attraction for one another. Although both characters are instantly drawn to one another, their relationship is slow to develop. I appreciate that aspect of the plot, since I have never been fond of two characters falling instantly in love. Both Caylor and Dylan find outlets for their feelings through their respective arts. Their barriers break down slowly during the course of the novel, and their secrets are eventually revealed, allowing Caylor and Dylan to confront their feelings. Overall, I found the latter part of the second half of the novel to be the most enjoyable portion of The Art of Romance as Caylor's and Dylan's relationship comes to fruition.

The concept of the Art of Romance is unique and fresh. Dylan is a young man with a less than pristine past, emerging from a relationship with an older woman. With his shaggy hair and tattoos, Dylan is not the typical clean-cut male lead in most inspirational novels. His character definitely carries more baggage than Caylor's, whose past is only marred by writing general market romance novels. I enjoyed watching Dylan work through his issues and grow into an honest and confident man who finally feels worthy of true and pure love. The Nashville setting was also a bonus. After visiting the city several years ago, I was able to picture many of the areas Dylan and Caylor visited throughout the novel.

Dacus infuses the novel with an abundance of details that set the scenes, both significant and insignificant. The novel reminded me of recent, contemporary Hallmark movies, with an emphasis eating and activities involving food. I felt that the plethora of descriptions buried the actual plot of the novel and slowed the pace. I appreciate attention to details; but the presence, and in some cases repetition, of small details were more of

a hindrance. I would have enjoyed more progression in the actual plot. However, I applaud Dacus for having the vision to imagine the most minute aspects of a scene and the small idiosyncrasies of her characters.

Although this was only a mediocre read for me personally, *The Art of Romance* is a well-written and well-thought out novel. Readers looking for a wholesome contemporary romance with some depth and a multitude of details will enjoy Kaye Dacus's latest novel, and her depiction of "the art of romance."

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## **Judy says**

The Art of Romance by Kaye Dacus Book 2 of the Matchmakers  
Book 1: Love Remains Book 3: Turnabout's Fair Play

What an enjoyable book! Nosy grandmother's determined to be the first ones who get the prized great grandchild... but first they have to marry off their grandchildren. So why not take a grandson from Perty and add a granddaughter from Sassy and kill two birds with one stone!

At thirty-five and six foot tall Caylor Evans don't have any hope for a future love. She thought she had that ten years ago, but someone came between them. She is a Professor, Author, involved in her churches ministry and most important she moved in with her grandmother, Sassy, five years ago after Papa's death. Sassy needs her and that is good enough, or is it? When she meets the handsome grandson of her Sassy's best friend Perty she has second thoughts...

Dylan Bradley has been through the wringer. At one time he loved his art work. Doing portraits and even some book covers to work his way through college. He was a disappointment to his parents, his other three brothers were getting all kinds of degrees but Dylan enjoyed his artwork, so his parents refused to pay his college. He had left God way behind after high school although his conscience often niggled at him when he knew he did wrong. As a Professor in Philadelphia his superior was Dr. Rhonda Kramer. She took him into her world and changed his art style, clothes and than his morals when he moved in with her. When he finally realized how she was running his life, and he stood his ground, he lost his job. Now he is back in Nashville, living in his grandparents carriage house and given a list of rules to follow. At age twenty-eight he was still treated like an immature child.

This is a great story, Dylan needs to come back to the Lord and forgive himself for his past mistakes. He can't judge all women to be like Rhonda and he has to see the love his grandparents have for him and that they truly care, unlike his parents. He has been separated from the love his family and misses the close relationship he had with his brothers. He starts seeing how he let Rhonda run and ruin his life. And when he starts to heal he hopes a beautiful redhead will give him a second chance at love. Or will she run when she finds out his past secrets?

Caylor has the love of her family, although there are huge issues with her sister, Felicity who now wants to be called Sage. She has her two close friends to help her through life as well, Zarah and Flannery. And she has Sassy. Can she tell Dylan her secret from her past without losing all hope of losing any chance with him?

\*\*Received through NetGalley for Review

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## **Sandy Kemp says**

Didn't like this at all. The characters were full of angst and self hatred over silly errors in judgment that they were convinced were terrible "sins". As I'm not christian this whole mindset just seemed unproductive. Their terrible sins consisted of writing romance novels, doing cover art for said novels, and getting involved in a bad relationship (with sex involved - and the sinner is in his late 20s).

There was so much made of age difference in couples, especially if it is the "wrong" way (she's older than he). It just seemed a bit ridiculous to worry about a few years when everyone is an adult.

For a christian book there was a lot of judging, especially about the younger sister, who was deemed to be "unambitious" which I guess is a sin for American christians. Apparently that stuff in the bible about judging not isn't really to be taken seriously.

Also found it boring to be told about the main male character traipsing around from one church to another looking for the perfect fit. who cares?

Just not my cup of tea. I read about 2/3 of the book and then just decided to stop. Why waste my time on characters I don't like?

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## **Sherrinda says**

I loved The Art of Romance by Kaye Dacus. I mean, I really loved it. I read a lot of books, but this book was one of those that I kept thinking about after I turned the last page. I loved it because the characters were real and I was able to forget I was reading and just live in the story world. When a book can transport me like that...well, that makes it a five-star read for me.

Here's the back cover copy:

Sassy Evans and Perty Bradley are determined to get their older grandchildren married off, but when twenty-eight-year-old Dylan comes home after being fired from his teaching position because of the betrayal of his ex-girlfriend, Perty knows her grandson has more important issues to deal with.

Sassy understands her friend's issues with timing, but she also sees so many ways in which Dylan would be the perfect match for her thirty-four-year-old granddaughter Caylor. With his record of acclaimed paintings and Caylor's best selling novels, they could compliment each other's talents and provide each other support and encouragement. And there's no denying the spark of attraction between the English professor with the untamed red hair and the painter with the unusual tattoos.

But neither grandmother realizes the secrets both Caylor and Dylan are keeping from each other. Will pain and embarrassment from the past keep Caylor and Dylan apart, or will they develop the courage to be truthful with each other and discover the true art of romance?

My thoughts:

I loved the theme of forgiveness and acceptance throughout the book. Dylan had some issues in his past that had him building up walls, struggling to forgive himself for things done. The author made Dylan so real to me that my heart just ached for him. I wanted to help enfold him into God's peace and give him assurance that God knows and accepts him no matter what. It was beautiful to see his gradual acceptance of himself.

Caylor was a unique character in looks and had a great personality. Extremely tall and self-assured, she seemed to radiate life and confidence. I think the thing I liked about Caylor was her acceptance. While she longed for romance in her life, she accepted her place helping care for her grandmother. She was accepting of others whose lifestyle was unlike her own. She was accepting of other's faults and past life, choosing to see them as God's handiwork...a work in progress.

I think Kaye Dacus does such a great job with character building. She weaves in dialogue that gives us such a sense of who the characters are without telling us about them. The romantic tension is tangible and made my heart skip a bit in places. She has created a great cast of secondary characters that adds depth and texture to the story. There's the grandmothers, the friends, Dylan's brothers, his mom and dad, and then some coworkers. I think one of my favorite scenes is with Dylan and his brothers. Their camaraderie made my heart smile and had me wondering if there might be a future series planned with them.

One of the unique things about the book is the seven year age difference between Caylor and Dylan...with Caylor being the older one. You don't see that often and I love how Kaye made it seem natural. You are aware of it, but it never seems awkward.

Anyone whose heart longs for others to find healing from their past will enjoy reading this compelling story. The Art of Romance is full of hope and longing fulfilled. It is a story of the bloom of love in the midst of healing and discovery.

The Art of Romance is a keeper and I can't say enough good things about it. So far it's my favorite of Kaye Dacus's library of work.

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